

Mike Diederich's Reasons for joining SAM

I am distressed by what I have seen over the past few weeks campaigning to be the Democratic Party's nominee for Rockland County District Attorney. I experienced many Republicans expressing hatred or great hostility towards the Democratic Party and Democrats generally. To my surprise, I also heard many Democrats say they are very disappointed in their party, some of whom said they would be leaving the Democratic Party.

After a great deal of thought, I have decided to leave the Democratic Party, and join a new party. I support Democratic core values—equality of opportunity and justice. But I distrust its leadership and dislike its priorities. It is a leadership that is too self-serving, and in bed with too many powerful special interest groups. Its priorities are not sufficiently pro-democracy and pro-Constitution. The Democratic Party is not sufficiently pro-American. It does not sufficiently advocate for all Americans and for our children's and grandchildren's future.

Let be clear, I regard the Republican leadership as even worse. Its leadership seems to reject many basic principles of democracy, such as the need for fair debate on the serious problems we face. It is a party is so hypocritical that in Rockland County, the Republican candidate for district attorney is a Democrat, Judge Tom Walsh, who is seeking the Democratic Party's line as well.

I have nothing against Judge Walsh, whom I respect as a lawyer, a judge and a man of integrity. Judge Walsh cannot be blamed for seeking to maximize his elective chances.

But I find offensive that the political machine will deprive the public of a choice of candidates for extremely powerful elective office of District Attorney. This elective office is vacant. The voters are entitled to more than a one person race. The voters deserve an election, not an anointment. It insults our democracy that the possibility of an anointment even exists.

The Republican leadership should be ashamed that it has nominated a member of the opposite party to head its ticket. Republicans should be able to express their displeasure on Election Day. But they may not be able, if their only choice is only between voting for Judge Walsh (a Democrat) or the unpalatable choice of voting for the Democratic nominee (who may also be Judge Walsh).

But this year there may be an alternative for voters—the new Serve America Movement or “SAM Party.” I am joining the SAM Party. Let me discuss my reasons.

Until this past week, I was seeking to become the Democratic candidate, among a total of five currently running. To win, I would need the support of the hard core Democrats that vote in primaries. I abandoned this effort. I do not wish to pander to the Democratic far left at the expense of seeking support from the “moderate majority”—the moderate Democratic, Republican, Conservative and independent voters who make up most of Rockland's voters. I am seeking to run for District Attorney of Rockland County on the SAM line. I will seek the support of not only the progressive left, but also the moderate right and everyone in between, namely, the “moderate majority.”

How can any moderate candidate get elected when the far left and the far right control the Democratic and Republican parties? How can the “moderate majority” have their interests heard? The answer is the SAM line.

I hope you will follow my example by changing your party affiliation to SAM. The SAM party was formed to work for the People, rather than for special interests. Today's major parties thrive

because of their extreme partisanship. They love their PACs and their moneyed special interests.

SAM was formed by people, including many veterans like myself, who believe that the country and democracy are much more important than political partisanship. SAM stands for dialogue and compromise in governance, so that the people's vital interests and wellbeing are served.

Think of "Uncle SAM" and what he represented—service of Americans in time of need.

If Judge Walsh becomes both the Democratic and Republican nominee for District Attorney, SAM can give the voters a choice. They can vote for the SAM candidate. I hope SAM will pick me as its candidate. My credentials for the office are much better than Judge Walsh and the other Democrats running. I am a veteran who was awarded a Bronze Star in Afghanistan. I am a lawyer who has influenced the U.S. Supreme Court, and who has made a career of advocating for people. But my strongest credential is that I am not politically beholden to anyone.

Democracy is not easy. I risked my life and limb in two combat zones to protect our democracy and our Constitution. I believe the Serve American Movement can provide a vehicle for people who recognize that in order for America to thrive, and to serve as a model for democracy in the world, we need citizens who are willing to participate in and contribute to the democracy.

If enough moderates from both the Republican and Democratic parties vote on the SAM line, and perhaps even re-affiliate with the SAM party, democracy may begin working again in our county, and then in our state, and then in our nation. Instead of Party extremists-- the extreme right and extreme left we see today—we will have the moderate middle being heard, with candidates devoted to the larger society and to "We the People."

With SAM, our governance will become more rational and thoughtful, and less partisan. On contentious political issues, whether gun control, abortion, immigration, the environment, race relations, sexual preference, immunizations and secular education of children in religious schools, the moderates of the SAM party will seek dialogue and compromise, so that on issues where reasonable people disagree, reasonable compromise can be achieved, with the overarching goal of making government work for the people.

"We the People" need to regain our democracy. I believe the SAM party will help achieve this. I hope to be a part of it.

Mike Diederich, Jr.